



Radiological Work Beyond Authorized Scope

Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory Lessons Learned

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Concern Statement: A qualified radiation worker performed equipment maintenance in a posted radiation area, resulting in an atypical personnel exposure. The work was not authorized on the Radiological Work Authorization (RWA).

Applicable to: Researchers and staff who perform work under radiological work authorizations.

Incident: A qualified radiation worker performed unauthorized equipment maintenance in a radiation area. Although the work location and the radioisotope handled were properly authorized, the maintenance task with the unshielded, high level activity was not specifically authorized on the RWA. The work resulted in an anomalous and elevated personnel exposure that prompted a review by Operational Health Physics.

Cause: Changes in work activities were not communicated to the radiation protection staff and the RWA was not updated to reflect these changes.

Recommended Actions

- ❑ Staff working with radiological materials should routinely review and update the RWA experiment descriptions to adequately address the current work scope. Specific protocol changes that involve new or additional radiation hazards require an RWA amendment. Minor changes to protocols and work scope typically do not require an amendment because the required precautions will not change.
- ❑ If you are unsure if your RWA requires an amendment or need further clarification, contact your assigned Health Physicist to discuss the proposed changes.

Further Information

Any additional assistance or questions regarding this incident or the lessons learned may be directed to Christine Donahue (x7736).

For other lessons learned, go to: http://www.lbl.gov/ehs/html/lessons_learned.htm